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Boothbay Region Historical Society News

November 2020

Researching and preserving our history

It will not be forgotten

Photograph: Barbers Island class in the 1950s

From Our Archives

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*Sardine factory on the east side, c.1905. Men in the sealing room solder the filled cans by hand.
Each solderer had a little fireplace by his bench to heat the iron.*

Fall 1916, Part II

By Barbara Rumsey

The news of eighty-four years ago.

On October 20, William Hodgdon, off the steamer *Grayling*, was pickpocketed at the Topsham Fair. The Good Roads League may have been running into a little resistance. There was a front-page appeal for support from everyone, even those who owned no horses or cars. The high school formed a track team, with Douglas Knight as captain, and Joe Dodge as manager. The *Register* asked if anyone could equal J. R. Giles of Dover Road having 28 sunflowers on one stalk!

The Charles R. Pinkham house, rented from Lyman Merry, burned at Spruce Point while Charles was at the sardine factory. All the Pinkhams' winter supplies were in and "The charred barrels of flour as much as anything made the scene after the fire a really piteous one."

October 27, the obituary for another William Hodgdon, born at Mill Cove, appeared. He had been a grocer and apple dealer for 22 years, having an apple cold storage facility on Howard Street. (Lester Barter remembered it as an egg cold storage also.) The phone company was setting one 30-wire cable, replacing the jumble of 15 double wires and, thus, eliminating the need for pole arms around town. Saul Hayes planned to run benefit movies for the Charles Pinkham family, 10¢ admission. Students at Trevett's school #13 (upper half of island) had their hares and hounds race. The Marrs of Southport were finally returning to Melrose after having put off their return because of the polio epidemic.

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Wiscasset was in town again with his portable mill, cutting the Frank Blake woodlot in North Boothbay, just south of the present site of the Railway Village. The lumber was being hauled out to a scow at Back Narrows.

Death, Votes, Turnips, Launching Parade

On November 10, the obituary for Civil War veteran David C. Adams, dead at 82, was printed. He had lived on the back side of Adams Pond. The presidential election results were given, Wilson having defeated Hughes. The oldest region voters were 85-year-old Southporter Abial W. Gray, who had voted for Republican Hughes, and Granville Seavey, 84-year-old East Boothbay resident and retired sailmaker, who had voted for Democrat Wilson.

November 17, the wedding of Mary Holton and writer Richard Hallett was front-page news. Harry Nickerson brought a 20 1/2-pound turnip, a yard across, to the *Register* office. The first snow fell and mail carrier Hiram McDougall had slippery trouble on the hills with the delivery from Wiscasset. The new Catholic Church was in progress; Elbridge Giles had moved the house on the site back out of the way, and Ben Coolen was in charge of building the church. A parade of the Good Roads League took place, with car owners Maddocks, Reed, Auld, Lewis, Thurston, and 25 others taking part. They drove from Boothbay to Wiscasset and back; it was such an unusual sight to see so many cars at once that there were bystanders along the route. The unique fish packing activities of H. I. Phinney (later Poole's wharf, later still Fisherman's Wharf area) were described.

November 24, the 50-man committee formed to plan a launching celebration for the fish hatchery's new vessel *Halcyon* saw the fruits of their labor. Speeches were given at the Opera House, followed by a parade escorted by the Fleur de Lis, Uniform Rank, Knights of Pythias. The parade arrived at the Townsend Marine Railway (now Sample's), and the vessel was launched, with hatchery Superintendent Hahn's daughter the sponsor, while hundreds looked on. The paper announced that John Seavey had his best fishing year ever, even though he started late, awaiting his new vessel. The Knights of Pythias celebrated their 34th anniversary.

From Blake's Boat Models to the *Wyoming*

December 8, the paper covered Arthur Blake's boat model business. He had built 1,200 small boats at his McFarland Point home, now gone, but then located off Eames Road near the water. The Adams shipyard in East Boothbay launched the 119-foot *Elizabeth Howard*, the largest mackerel fisherman yet built. Irving Reed had boat work to follow a 122-foot steamer in process: a 35-foot cruiser, and a 66-foot cruiser for a Cape Cod Nickerson. His crew was expected to go from 10 to 25 men. Captain Gregory Campbell was coming home for Christmas, taking leave of his position on the *Wyoming*, the largest wooden ship afloat.

A Stormy Christmas

December 22, the paper reported on a big storm that had a hard impact on the town. There was no mail from Friday to Monday, and no lights (electricity for those who had it) from Friday to Tuesday. The storm had driven Brewer's 75-ton schooner *Louisa Frances* of Southport aground at

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him on the island, and Zina Fiere dressing out his 6-month pig at 200 pounds. The paper challenged anybody to slaughter a larger pig. Harbor storekeeper Joseph McCobb's obituary was printed. His store had been located where the bank building was later built.

December 29, the sad news of Captain Courtney Gilbert's death was printed. While in Portland signing men up for work on the lobster smack *Dorothy G.*, he was accidentally gassed at a lodging house. Dewey Spofford printed a front-page thank-you to all of his ice customers. Superintendent Alpheus Dodge at the Knickerbocker iceworks was coping with more damage to the ice elevator, 250' of it having been destroyed in the storm.

Christmas spirits were dampened by the inability of the steamer *Nahanada* to get to Boothbay Saturday, December 23, with passengers, mail, and express packages. She attempted to get away from the wharf at Bath, but because of an unusual low tide caused by strong winds from the westward she kicked up so much mud in starting that she filled her condensers. After cleaning them, she headed out the next day, but ice and strong winds held her time down—it took two hours and forty minutes for her to get to Westport Upper Landing—she gave up.

The end of the year brought bad news for the Harbor. Squirrel Island had taken its case against the town of Boothbay Harbor to the P.U.C., complaining that it had received "inadequate and insufficient water service." The year closed with a report on the Christmas pageant held at the Congregational Church, not by children, but adults. Some of the participants were Mary Kenniston and Dick Hallett, with wise men Judge Brackett, Dr. Gregory, and William Keefe. Shepherds and Bethlehem boys and girls were played by 28 other people. Preceding the show was a program put on by the Sunday School.

That's the news of eighty-four years ago.

For more articles by Barbara Rumsey about the Boothbay region check our website

www.boothbayhistorical.org/out-of-our-past

Thank you!

A huge thank you from everyone at Boothbay Region Historical Society
to Dr. Emily S. C. Rittershaus, sister of our wonderful Office Manager
Claire Ritterhaus. Dr. Emily Rittershaus has, through a matching grant from her employer [Bristol-Myers Squibb](#), bought BRHS three HEPA filters,
which will heighten the safety of staff and researchers during this difficult time.

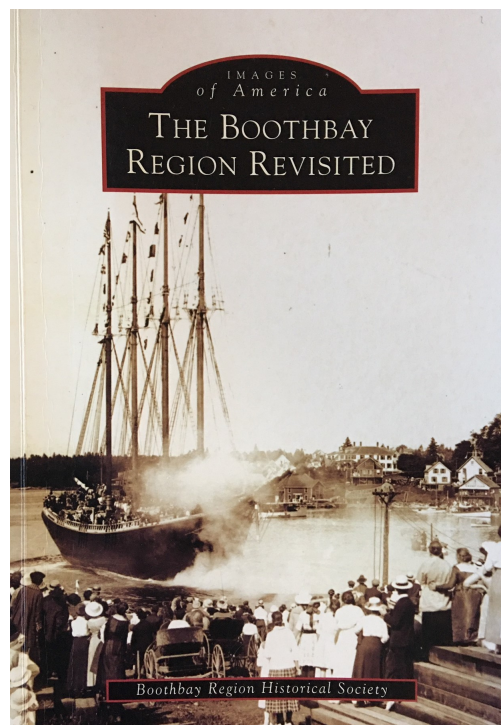
Dr. Rittershaus earned her PhD in microbial genetics and works in cancer therapeutics R&D.

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It is really important to be able to address indoor air quality during this time because improving ventilation is one of the most important tools we can use to reduce the spread of Covid-19 (and other respiratory pathogens). Increasing ventilation can be as simple as opening windows and doors when inside a building, but that is not always practical in the winter, so another option to improve ventilation is to use HEPA filters, which can filter out viral particles from the air. Improved ventilation along with wearing masks and distancing are effective in reducing transmission when used all together. More information on ventilation can be found in the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health's guidelines for Healthy Buildings. <http://Covid-19.forhealth.org>

Museum Store

The holidays are coming! Yes they are, even this year. Or especially this year.



Images of America, The Boothbay Region Revisited

Boothbay Region Historical Society, Barbara Rumsey, Editor

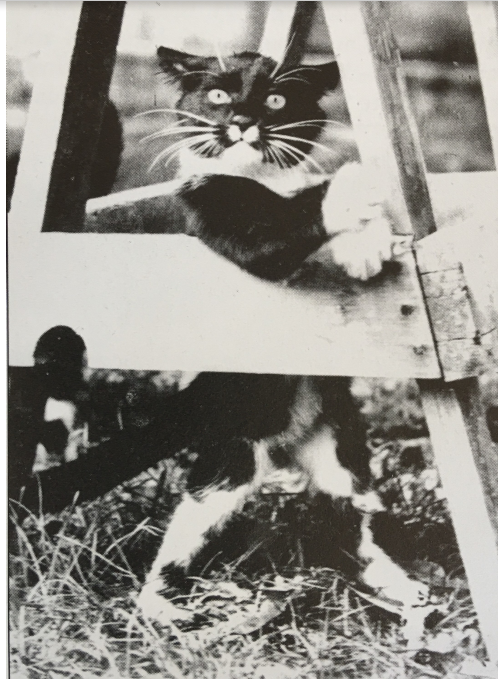
Published in 2004, \$20

You are probably familiar with this wonderful series celebrating the history of America in vintage photographs. It covers our history from early times through the early twentieth century. It is meticulously researched, fascinating, and fun.

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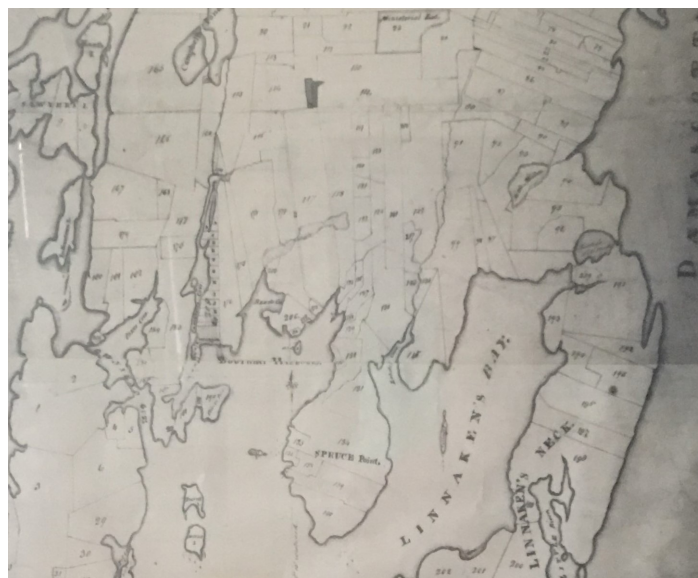


Capt. Albert McIntyre's wharf cat.

You will want to own this, or to give it to the history-loving people on your holiday list!

To order your copy, call us at 207-633-0820 Thursday or Friday, 10am to 2pm.

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from our [Museum Store](#).



1815 map by Daniel Rose

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MUSEUM REMINDER

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are open by appointment only, Thursdays through Saturdays. Anyone wishing to do research at the museum should first contact office manager Claire Rittershaus to schedule a time to work alone or with local historian Barbara Rumsey.

To make an appointment to visit the BRHS museum, contact Claire at brhs@gwi.net or 207-633-0820. Please check our website or Facebook page for updated information.

In these difficult times we thank ALL of you for your support, be it comments and likes on Facebook, subscribing to enews, shopping at our museum store, or memberships and donations.

Thank you!



Barters Island School c. 1898 (detail)

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*We're (normally) open year-round,
Thursday through Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.*

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